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INDIAN POLITICS AND ENGLISH POLITICAL PARTIES

BY MR. T. V. VENKATARAMA AIYER, B.A., B.L., F. M. U.

Prominent Indians in all parts of India have been for many years trying their utmost to induce the people of England to take some interest in Indian political questions. Macaulay complained that the people of England knew more about the Spanish conquest of America than about their brethren founding a mighty Empire in the heart of the Asiatic continent. Though more than 60 years have now passed since Macaulay's death, the ignorance of Indian affairs on the part of Englishmen is as collosal as ever. Indians who visited England in the early part of last year in connection with the Reform scheme found the people there kept in utter ignorance of events transpiring here and learnt that in many parts of that country ideas were prevailing that India contained people not far removed from Red Indians and Cannibals.

To fight against such ignorance andto induce the British democracy to take a real living interest in Indian affairs would require propaganda work of a most gigantic character. Though the Congress has been in existence for 35 years our leaders made no serious attempts to start a permanent agency in London to look after Indian interests. These interests, to be properly attended to, require not merely the establishment of a permanent office manned entirely by the Indians but the presence in England of prominent Indians collecting information, touring the country, organizing lectures, holding exhibitions and doing all such necessary things as would bring home to the people even in the nooks and corners of Great Britain the existence of an Indian nation and its claim to be treated as a civilized race, entitled to all the rights of British citizenship. Neither the British Committee of the House of Commons nor the newspaper "India" have ever succeeded in bringing home to the English Democracy the troubles and difficulties of the British Indian Subjects of His Majesty.

During the latter part of the last century a movement was set on foot by prominent Indian publicists to link the fortunes of India with those of some one or other of the great English political parties. For many years after Burke, there was no member of the House of Commons who took a genuine interest in India till Henry Fawcett entered Parliament in 1865 and his robust liberalism astonished and irritated the members even of his own party. Great hopes were at one time entertained that the Liberal party would recognize the claims of India to special consideration. Gladstone immersed in his zeal for the Irish cause had little time to spare for the study of Indian questions. Of course Indians could never approach for assistance the Tory party which appointed Viceroys of the type of Lord Lytton, Curzon and Minto and whose policy is, as Sir Henry Cotton puts it, a policy of race and class domination, of disregard of the peoples' wishes, and of aggression abroad and repression at home. Of the two great political parties it could only be to the Liberal party that Indians could turn for help in their troubles and difficulties. Sir William Wedderburn, who first organized an Indian Parliamentary party, was a liberal of the purest type but neither he nor Sir Henry Cotton who belonged to the same party could induce either the Liberal party machinery or the House of Commons to take a sympathetic view of Indian questions. When deputations went from India to England in 1890, 1905, and 1915, it was the Liberal party which was approached by the members thereof to do justice to Indian claims but Liberals when in office behaved no better than the Conservatives so far as Indian questions were concerned. People gradually began to lose faith in an alliance

with the Liberals and even if the War had not intervened and the Liberal party had not been reduced to impotence, the idea of linking our fortunes with them would not have been seriously contemplated. The Liberals, however, are no longer in power and it is doubtful whether they led by Mr. Asquith will ever regain their old position in English political life.

The only other party with whom an alliance is possible is the Labour party. So early as 1889 when Mr. Wedderburn addressed the Congress in Bombay as its President he spoke warmly of the support which everywhere in England the Labour party was willing to extend to Indian aspirations. During the years in which Sir Henry Cotton was member of Parliament, though he had to complain of the attitude of the Liberal party, had nothing but praise for the assistance which the Irish and Labour parties rendered to the Indian cause.

It was Ben spoor who when the Joint Commitee of the two Houses, was sitting in connection with the Reform scheme voted always and steadily in favour of the Indian view on all questions which came up before that Committee and on some occasions he was almost the only voter who favoured the view which the National Congress was advocating. Those who went to England to press forward the Congress demands always found sympathetic friends amongst the members of the Labour party.

All these circumstances make it evident that if there should be any alliance at all with any of the political parties, Indian politicians could only seek an alliance with labour. But the question, we have to answer for ourselves is, is this alliance necessary? Is it in the interests of the country that there should be any alliance at all with any of the English political parties? The question is not one of mere sympathy. There are deeper considerations behind the question of an alliance. I remember Mr. Charles Bradlaugh in 1889 refused to receive pecuniary help from the Congress towards his election expenses as that would impair his usefulness as an independent liberal. Each party in England has its own battles to fight and can find little time to spare for the work of the Empire. Labour party especially has colossal issues to face. At present that party has little chance of winning the elections. Its attitude in the coal crisis has embittered the people and the result of it is apparent in the complete rout of that party in the recent Municipal Elections. It is scarcely likely that the Labour party will come into power in the near future and when it does come into power it has tremendous issues at stake *e. g.*, that between Labour and Capital to find time to attend to the amelioration of Indian conditions. Sympathy when you are not in office and when you have got only a remote chance of getting into office is one thing and action when you are clothed with power and have all the duties and burdens of office with you is quite another. Labour might help India but it is a matter of grave doubt whether when a Labour ministry comes into power it will find the time even if it has the inclination to translate its sympathy into action.

There are, however other and graver difficulties in the way of our allying ourselves with the Labour party. More than political advance, India's salvation lies in its making progress in starting Industrial concerns. We have got cheap labour. We have plenty of raw materials. None the less our industrial progress is so little. The fact is that an alien Bureaucracy in order to keep itself safe passed the Arms Act and emasculated a whole population. In the industrial sphere free trade and countervailing duties railway and other preferences for the export of raw materials have brought about almost the same result. If England were to leave us to-morrow we would be unable to defend ourselves from foreign invasion.Even if the present administration continues, we can impose no bar to the exploitation of the country by foreigners of all denomination, Englishmen, Americans, Germans and Japanese.

If a Labour Government comes into power, these difficulties will be in a large measure accentuated. In recent times, it has become necessary for labour in all the various countries to act together. If, therefore you cannot discriminate against great Britain you cannot discriminate against any other country bound by the rules of the International Labour Federation. It will be suicidal for the Labour party to permit Indians by the revision of its tariffs to prohibit the importation of English goods and it will be equally impossible for us by the use of preferential tariffs or otherwise to profit the importation of any other foreign goods.

Nor is this all. At present our only chance of industrial progress lies in our having an unlimited supply of cheap labour. All the influence of the Labour party in England will be directed against the continuance of this. It was only quite recently that the International Labour Bureau insisted upon lascars being paid at the same rate as any white sailor. This certainly was not to benefit lascars but to prevent cheap labour supplanting the European sailor lascars who are in course of time bound to disappear and I am certain that no English Company will employ an Indian if he can get a European to serve him for the same wage. If when labour is in power, laws could be passed which would prevent the employment of labour below a particular minimum wage, our industrial progress might be said to be altogether sealed.

Besides these difficulties labour when in power is not likely to behave towards India differently from any other party which has got into power and it will be futile to expect that the advent of a Labour ministry will usher in the millennium for us. Mr. Thomas, M. P., the foremost leader of Labour in England has already declared that India can only gradually get self-governing institutions and Colonel Wedgewood, another great Labour leader, has openly stated that Labour will wash its hands of India if we do not give up Non-Co-operation. The indications are clear that if India wants to raise itself in the scale of nations it can only do so by its own independent exertions and not by trusting to the tender mercies of any political party in England.

Mr. Montagu came into power with large promises. Once he passed the Suez Canal, the fetid atmosphere of Indian officialdom was enough to choke the breath out of him. Even people with large hearts and wide sympathies are absolutely now where the moment they put their foot on Indian soil. There is no reason to doubt that a Labour Viceroy will succumb to the influencss which so largely prevail here to our detriment. It seems to be, therefore, that unless we stand out for our rights, sink our petty differences and without depending on outsiders put our shoulders to the wheel there is no chance for our country obtaining that status to which, she is undoubtedly entitled.

THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY

The Government of India have, at last, issued a statement of their policy towards the Non-Co-operation movement. We are afraid that the statement, instead of removing popular discontent, will only tend to increase it. What strikes us as entirely curious is the flattering unction which the Government lay to their souls that their diagnosis of the present situation is correct. The Government have no doubt in their minds as to the unconstitutionality of the Non-Co-opeiation movement but, we are told, that various considerations have prompted them to refrain from taking repressive action. We must, we suppose, thank them for this small mercy. The terrible picture which the Government have drawn of the evils that will follow in the wake of this movement leaves us unmoved. The statement issued by the Government is ridiculously one-sided in that it has not made any reference to the underlying causes which have brought above this movement. A great English statesman has said that when popular discontents are very prevalent, there has generally been something found amiss in the constitution or the conduct of Government. But in India, the reverse of this is supposed to be true.

We are simply amazed at the attitude displayed by the Government of India. If side by side with a statement of their policy, the Government had recognised the causes of the present discontents and informed the people as to how they propose to solve them, they would have displayed some statesmanship. It cannot be too often repeated that India is in no mood to listen to soothing words and plausible sentimentalities. The Government must directly meet the wishes of the people. We do hope that the Government's invitation to men of moderate mind in India to take concerted measures to oppose the Non-Co-operation movement will fall on deaf ears. For the sake of the internal peace of the land, we would implore the men of moderation who are likely to fall into the Government's trap to secure at least the redress of the wrongs which they resent in common with the Non-Co-operators. If, instead of this, they lend a helping hand to the Government, they would be betraying the people.

INDIAN STATES

POPULAR MOVEMENTS AND POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP.

BY MR. S. RAMANATHA AIYAR F. S. SC. (LOND). M. R. A. S.

The Indian States are integrally connected with the British Empire. This connection rests not merely on their relations to the British Crown but also on the wide range of matters in which both the British provinces and the states are in common vitally interested.

Hence their polity is a part of the polity of British India. This indissoluble connection has a mutual and abiding value. That this is so will be realized from the recent advocacy of the Governer of Madras to adopt some of the systems obtaining even in the small state of Cochin. The principle so nobly enunciated by His Excellency of mutual crossing of the frontier to recognise and follow the best methods employed in attending to progress as a whole is of immense value " in estimating the future position of the Indian States in a changing Indian Empire."

Whatever be the constitutional position assigned to the Indian States in the body politic of the Birtish Empire popular Government is the ideal both in them and in the Indian Empire of which they form an integral part. The voice of the governed is the key-note of the new policy. And this policy is as old as the States themselves. The Indian Rajas never had the inclination or energy to be tyrants. And the history of their States has taught them what rights they have and how far they could resist the wishes of the people. Rama's sacrifice of Sita at the ordeal of fire in deference to public opinion is no mere classic sentiment. Advanced and patriotic Indian States like Travancore have long and largely propounded and pursued the policy of deference to the people's voice. There is absolutely no conflict of interests between the Indian rulers and the ruled. The Rajas have no vested interests against those of their subjects with whom they are often one in origin and always in sentiment. Thus Indian rulers are in a position to carry out more easily the policy of Reform to which British rulers are committed by the Reform Act. They welcome therefore the rising democratic sentiment.

This democratic sentiment has formed the feature and foundation of the early political life of Indian States. Though the States are stirred by a series of national impulse it is obviously incorrect to say that the nation is new born into this popular emotion. It is likewise a mistake to think that the people are making a new ground for progress and have therefore to proceed by gradual and graded steps. The popular voice has been always potent. To gauge its full significance I would refer to two typical popular movements which marked and moulded the public policy at different periods in the history of Travancore which is a typical surviving specimen of the traditions of Ancient Indian States.

The first one occurred at the commencement of the Malabar era. When the power of the priests was in full swing the priest-politicians gave a constitution to their religious sanctity. Absolute ownership of land vested in them according to the law of the land as ordained by Parasurama. They built and consecrated several temples to which large tracts of land were dedicated. And of these temples and lands they became proprietory wardens. The control of affairs vested in an Ecclesiastical Council of which the King was a member. The Synod of these priestly wardens became in course of time a powerful body. They chose the Revenue Collectors from among eight families of Nair nobles known as the *Eltu Veettil Pillamurs*. These were free to have things

in their own ways as along as the priestly dignitaries were put in funds. Their ways were oppressive and the oppression of the people grew intolerable. It was at this stage the Assembly of the six-hundred came to their rescue and rose to the occasions. It held its great historic sitting of 1235 and strongly protested against the arbitrary acts of the pillai-collectors with the priestly council at their back. The powerful voice of the people prevailed. The result was that the King had to yield and issue a proclamation in terms of the resolutions passed by the Assembly. From the evidence of inscriptions it is seen that the proclamation prohibited the farming out of the lands to the highest bidder by the sacerdotal dignitaries who enjoyed the Revenue. It empowered the members of the Sabha to inspect the lands in seasons of drought and to remit the arrears of tax and other minor charges. It generally recognized the principle of accepting what the members of the Sabha agreed among themselves and asked for in common. This was rightly regarded as one of the great charter of the people. Its value lay in the over-throw of the power of theocracy by sheer triumph of the united voice of the people. And in it the Barons of England at Runnymede might discern a distant likeness..

The other popular movement took place 200 years later when the King either forgot his lessons or learned them badly. His executive got the better of him. And they reached the acme of arbitrariness during the weak and wicked administration of a Nambudri-Cabinet. The system of extortion excited popular resentment to a high picth. And Velu Tampi known as the Hampden of Travancore sounded the brazen drum—the ancient signal for summoning the people. They met in Council resolved to put down the ministerial tyranny, and proceeded to the capital. They formed an arbitration tribunal to try the minister sentenced him to banishment and furnished his confederates according to their deserts. They proposed a new cabinet and a new constitution which the alarmed Raja accepted with alacrity.

Both these political movements illustrate in different ways how at two turning epochs, in the history of the ancient Chera Empire of which Travancore is a typically surviving specimen, the voice of the people asserted itself in complete unison and triumph. The theory that India has never enjoyed a popular constitution according to present day ideas is only a historical fiction. This will be considered in my next article.

A MADRAS MEMORY: MURUGASEN MUDALI

By "Flaneur"

"There are more things in Heaven and Earth Than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

Where he originally came from I do not know and at what age he began to perform the marvels he is credited with having achlieved local history is silent. It is enough to say that in the plenitude of his powers he was known to all Madras, and even to parts of the mofussil. As the suffix Mudali implies he was a Non-Brahmin and a caste man. This gave him a prestige which he would not have had as an Audi-Dravida or a Muhammedan.

"I met Murugasen Mudali, for the first time." says a Police officer-who is now living and prepared to vouch for the exceeding cleverness of Muregasen Mudali—" when I was quite young in the service and being trained in my duties. I certainly had not heard of him previously and it was quite by accident that I first made his acquaintance. It happened that at about 7 o'clock one evening I was crossing the little bit of garden dubbed a park, and which gave its new name to "Park Town." Before the formation of the tiny part near the Central Station the site was occupied by a number of small houses as a part of John Pereira's. The Indians still call the locality "Jumpra Thotam" or John Pereira's garden so that there was probably a garden there in olden times maintained by one John Pereira of imperishable memory. Well, I was crossing the park when I heard a man remonstrating with too budmashes or *somaries* as they are called in Madras. On approaching the trio, Murugasen Mudali, as he turned out to be, was struggling with one *Somarie*, while the other was searching his pockets. As a young and enthusiastic police officer, this scene roused my vie and I ran up and, as the Somaries let go of their hold, just succeeded in laying my rattan across the back of the man who was holding Murugasen. They both then disappeared and Murugasen, now the worse in body or pocket for the incident, thanked me for my assistance. I only then knew that he had a considerable sum of money tied in a cummerbund round his waist. As I said before, I had not heard of Murugasen Mudali and was somewhat heedless of his earnest request that I should visit his house at an early opportunity. Murugasen was a thickset man of average height and, when I knew him about 35 or 40 years of age. He wore a big moustache was of a black complexion and dressed neatly but never wore sandals or shoes of leather.

Before I relate one or two incidents in my police career, it is necessary to say that Murugasen Mudali was consulted by all sorts and conditions of men from European Officers. Civil and Military, to the man in the street. He was consulted regarding mysterious thefts which defied the investigations of the Police, about absent lovers and as to where they were, what they were doing? and whether they were faithful? about examination successes and among numerous other future possibilities, the winning number of the Derby Sweep. Lovers and love difficulties and prospects engaged Murugasen's attentions constantly: for, among his *clientele* were numerous young women. His fixed charge for a consultation was annas six, and on no account would he accept more or less. His residence was in Pursewalkum. .

Being puzzled about a stolen back note which was on my crime register, and finding no clue I bethought me of Murugasen about whose achievements I learnt after making his acquaintance. Early one morning I called to see him and I received a most cordial welcome; and Murugasen smiled knowingly, as if he knew why I had called, which, as a matter of fact, he did. I entered an anteroom and after a little conversation Murugasen said to me "I know why you have come. There is first a desire to ascertain where a certain bank note is secreted and secondly, a more serious question about a sister of yours in England. As for the first I may tell you that you have not made a proper search of the house where the Ayah has hidden the note. 'Nonsense' I remarked I have made a very careful search.' 'So' said Murugasen," into the bedroom on the Eastern side of the house and there as you must know are two chests of drawers. Under the outer circular support of the brass ornamented chest, you will find the Rs. 100 note folded into a compass so small as to be completely hidden by the support." As for the other thing, your sister, come into the next room." This was a somewhat larger apartment, and, on the walls were the pictures of numerous Hindu dieties and, *mirabili dictu* in a place of honour a picture of crucified Christ! There was no other furniture except one chair, one stool, and a table on which rested, what seemed an oblong box, with one hole, on the side facing the greater part of the room, half an inch in diameter. The box was covered with a rich cloth and by it stood an image of a woman half size (dressed with real hair, and very life-like.) After our entry into the room, which had one window high up, strongly barred, Murugasen locked the door and then raised both his hands and made (*namskarams*) with reverence to the box. Asking me to be seated. Murugesan, asked me 'what I wished to know about my sister'. He there lit a couple of pastiles *oodubuthies* in tamil giving off a fragrant odour with spirals of smoke; and sitting close to the box he invoked, whatever it contained and made it a medium to answer him. On his doing so, I heard a metallic sound like that of a call-bell in the box, and Murugasen reverentially put certain questions in an undertone regarding which I could understand nothing. There was no audible response, from the box but Murugasen listened at the hole and looked at the smoke spirals punctuating his actions, with an audible "hem, hem, hem," as if he were responding to the communications made to him. He then gave me information which certainly astonished me for their knowledge and which I subsequently, found to be correct in every particular. I may mention that if Murugesen did not obtain the call bell reply to his first and second invocations to the god in the box his third invocation was a command and the call bell sound was invariably the response. My experience was not singular; hundreds of people could testify—and there are very many who could vouch to Murugasen's uncanny and unerring knowledge of things about which he could not possibly have known anything and with which he had not the remoted connexion. I could give several specific instances of his mysterious powers of revealing the past, foretelling the future or representing the present in another place, with absolute fidelity to detail. Whether he was a thought reader, a hypnotist and a spiritualistic medium I cannot say; but he professed no particular creed, did not deserve to make proselytes to his profession and was a genialcheerful man who was more amused with his clients than anxious to get his moderate 'six' anna fee. One young lady informed the writer cf this acccount that she consulted him about an examination, and he told her after consulting the box, that she would pass, that she had only secured a certain number of marks specified by him in a particular subject, which he mentioned, but that her papers were so good in other subjects that she would be given a pass; and that a year after she would marry a gentleman whose appearance he meticulously described; and all was true and came true. Her intended came from Burma. Being very intimate with Murugasen after being associated in the discovery of several police cases Murugasen permitted the police officer to look into the mysterious box which was empty except for a silver plate let into the box and on it was what resembled an ordinary penrest and instead of the pen an object in silver shaped with a spoon. The falling of the spoon—how it was made to move it is impossible to say—produced the call-bell sound.

Murugasen Mudali died some years ago in the General Hospital of either carbuncle or cancer and his name and fame, as a necromancer and magician died with him, leaving no successor to the great sorrow of many persons to whom he was helpful. He was never known to aid the machinations of evil men, or to trespass against truth and justice. No despisable epitaph surely.

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD.

Col. Wedgwood, M.P. in the course of a speech in Bombay said :—

He wanted them not go way on the wrong track, not to hate but to love their neighbour to remember that political freedom was only the first stage, to remember that nationalism itself was the first stage. They had acquired national feeling in this country because that feeling gave self-respect. Within the last 30 years he had seen the backs of Indians stiffened. That was what nationality had done but when they were a great free people here when they were free and the nucleus of an Asian federation he exhorted them to remember that nationality was not enough. It was not for them when they were free, when they were self-governing to copy the vices of the older civilisations. It was not for them to dominate, it was not for them either a Mohemadan to bully a Hindu, or a Hindu to bully a Mohemadan. International brotherhood of all men was the end of all true politics.

THE GOVERNMENT AND COMMISSIONS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MADRAS REVIEW.

Sir,

The *Hindu* has not approved of the ill-considered action of the coal miners in England, and that is the only possible view to take for the interests of a minority must give place to those of the whole nation; but it is worth while drawing attention to the opinion of the Miners' Federation of the Government for declining "to give effect to the recommendations of the majority of the Sankey commission after pledging themselves to them in order to avert a crisis." The words in quotation marks are Reuter's and apply most appositely to the action of the Governments in India with regard to similar commissions — whose name is legion—and recommendations in this country. Numerous Commissions have been appointed on Indian problems of administration and have made recommendations in favour of ameliorating Indian grievances but in most of these the recommendations have never been fully given effect to, but have been misinterpreted, evaded, misapplied or altogether ignored and thereby have brought little or no benefit to Indians. In acting in this manner, the *bona fides* of the Government are vitiated and the trust of the people destroyed. It is much better for a Government to flatly refuse gratifying an aspiration or request and to stand firmly by that refusal than to resort to opportunism of the kind of which the coal miners complain. Mr. Lloyd George's Government are not singular in this respect. Some of his predecessors, at any rate, have not scrupled to go back on their words and to evade responsibilities to which they had committed themselves. Apart from the Premier's pledges to the miners, we have only to mention the broken pledges relative to the Turkish question, and what do the recommendations of the Esher Committee mean, but measures to neutralize and practically nullify the powers of the non-official element in the approaching Reform Scheme Councils. The troubles in Ireland are the legacy of broken pledges and inequality of treatment. Speaking of the inequity of the Union of Ireland with England 34 years ago, in the House of Commons Mr. Gladstone said: "The Union was followed by six consequences—1, broken promises, 2. the passing of bad laws, 3. the putting down of liberty, 4. the withdrawing from Ireland, benefits that we took to ourselves, 5. the giving to force and to force only power what we ought to have given to hour and justice, and 6. the shameful postponement of relief to the most crying grievances" It was a most damaging indictment and can it be denied that an indicotment of a somewhat similar character could be drawn up with regard to broken pledges and postponed promises to India? In that memorable speech Mr. Gladstone pleaded that it should be said no longer throughout the civilizud world that Ireland is the Poland of England and while Mr. Lloyd George warmly sympathises with Poland in her present struggle for liberty he is prepared to put into action all the forces of coercion in restoring order in Ireland and in refusing to grant that country the liberty she craves. It is impossible to forecast the future of India, if the present discontents are permitted to gather momemtum. We can only hope that England may be true to herself and that the British statesmen to whose Lands the destiny of this great land is committed will be endowed with true courage to do the right, with prudence to prevent trouble and wisdom to knit to England the loyalty and devotion of Indians in the Empire's interest.

S. H.

THE NAGPUR CONGRESS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE MADRAS REVIEW"

SIR,

The Congress at Nagpur will be one of the most momentous ever held. The country is awaiting with anxious heart and puzzled head for the confirmation or modification of the Non-Co-operation Resolution. Sincere patriots whose loyalty to the Congress has made them acquiesce for the nonce in its decision, have openly declared that they would try to have it so modified so as to make it possible for a larger number to effectively carry out the full programmre. Other leaders equally loyal to the Congress and the country, have decided to consider themselves not bould down by its advice and are following out the old Nationalist Programme to secure as many seats in Council as possible for the Nationalits so that they may dominate the official organs as they already predominate the National organisations for an authoritative expression of the voice of the People. Others again with a good record of public work behind them would strive to bring round the Congress to the view that they sincerely hold that the Reforms must be accepted and worked up to yeild further progress. Betwixt and between these three well defined groups of leaders who would contest the lead given by Mahatma Gandhi, are some nebulous personages who have been all things at all times but nothing long'. The Congress will not therefore be the humdrum staid affair of the old days or the assembly moved by the passion of the hour as in recent times but an assemblage where leaders will confer together with earnestness and sincerity of purpose the best course for the people to attain their long cherished goal of Swaraj.

The constitution and the creed of the Congress may also

come up for consideration for in the need of the hour it has outgrown the old form and shibboleth.

The Congress must be made more truly reresentative of the people and it is gratifying to note that a person of the highest prestige and authority in the Congress is moving actively in the matter of organising it on a broad base building up from the village through the Firka, Taluk and the District into Provincial bodies federating into the Congress. When such a machinery is established it would be easy to secure and claim that the voice of our Congress is the voice of the country.

The creed of the Congress is now twelve years old. The British Nation has twice responded however inadequately to the call for Reform and yet the goal is far off in all conscience. The world has been in travail and as the Premier of our soveriegn has said, we live the life of centuries in a year. It would be idle to believe that India has been untouched by the Time Spirit. It is therefore the duty of every self-respecting [illegible] the world his present ideals. The attempts to approach this vital issue have hitherto been too devious, indirect and hesitating. It behoves our leaders of all pursuations to take up the matter with a full sense of responsibility and arrive at a reasoned decision on the matter.

Apart from these two all important questions and besides the all absorbing matter of the Non-Co-operation resolution, we have the questions of the Declaration of Rights, the place of Indians in the Empire, and the rights of Labour to fuller and freer life, three topics of prime importance on which the voice of the people must make itself heard in no halting or uncertain tone. These are momentous issues which cry for immediate attention and whatever may be the mandate of the Congress, these have to be grappled with even at this session.

C. P. SUNDARA ROW,
Salem.

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